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**Targeted Language Activity**

**Targeted Language Feature**: Apostrophes in Contractions

**Explanation**: Apostrophes in contractions is an informal way of writing or speaking the English language. A contraction is a shortened form of one or two words that includes verbs with not, pronouns with will, pronouns and nouns with the verb to be, pronouns with the verb to have, and pronouns with would or had. The apostrophe takes the place of the missing letter or letters. Because there are so many contractions it’s important for ELLs to practice and memorize how words are contracted together by an apostrophe.

Examples:

Formal Sentences Informal Sentences

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| I cannot go outside and play. | I can’t go outside and play. |
| She will go to the library after school. | She’ll go to the library after school. |
| I am a student in second grade. | I’m a student in second grade. |
| I have already done my homework. | I’ve already done my homework. |
| He’d want to go to the zoo. | He would want to go the zoo. |

Activity: After showing a list of words and contractions side by side to the students I would have them identify what letter or letters were omitted by the apostrophe. The activity will focus on the contractions of I am, I will, cannot, it is, and we will. Each student will be given a copy of the poem “I’m Building a Rocket” where they will have to change the underline words into contractions as the poem is being read out loud. Once the poem has been read and the underline words have been changed to contractions the poem will be read once more using contractions.

**I'm Building a Rocket**

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| --- | --- |
| I am building a rocket.  As soon as I am done  I am taking my friends  on a trip to the sun.  But what do you mean  that the sun is too hot?  Oh well, I suppose  I will just pick a new spot.  I am building a rocket.  I am finishing soon  and taking my friends  on a trip to the moon!  But what do you mean  that the moon has no air?  Well dang, then I guess  that we cannot go up there.  I am building a rocket.  It is going to fly.  I am taking my friends  way up high in the sky.  But what do you mean  when you ask how we will land?  This rocket is harder  to build than I planned.  To heck with the rocket.  It is out in the shed.  I am taking my friends  out for pizza instead. --Kenn Nesbitt |  |

**Teaching Point:**  Explain to the student that apostrophes show missing letter in contractions. Remind students that some contractions are read the same but have a different meaning like in the pronoun its and the contraction it’s where it is a possessive pronoun that modifies a noun and it’s is contraction for it has or it is.

**Extension**: As a follow up to the activity I will have the students practice the contractions used in the poem with a partner. ELL will be partnered with native English speakers. Students will have to use the contractions used in the poem I’m, I’ll, can’t, it’s, and we’ll to write five sentences using one contraction for each sentence. After all the students have written their sentences we will share their sentences to the class while the teacher writes the sentences on the board to see how they used the contractions.

**Merits of the Activity**: This activity targets and teaches a commonly used feature of the English language that can be confusing for all students especially English language learners. Apostrophes have different ways of using them making it important for students to understand how they are being used and what they are trying to show whether it’s through showing possession of a noun or by shortening a group of words into a contraction. Different languages have different ways of using apostrophes, so by doing this activity it will help students fully understand what contractions are and how they are used. Through the activities students are able to listen, visually see how contractions are made, learn how to read and write them, supporting and building their language development as well as understanding what contractions are.